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ABSTRACT

A discussion of FLES (foreign language in the elementary school, including introductory, exploratory, or immersion) looks at the challenges that need to be identified and met for successful planning and implementation. The role and importance of FLES in the 1990s is briefly reviewed, FLES program types are outlined, and FLES is examined in greater detail both from a broad, administrative point of view and a classroom-oriented perspective. The macro-perspective looks at considerations in program design, program administration and evaluation, community involvement, and educational and administrative policy. The micro-perspective addresses instructional issues affecting curriculum content and design, teaching methods and techniques, classroom environment and communication, and instructional materials. A suggested 15-item core bibliography for FLES and a list of 19 references are appended. (MSE)

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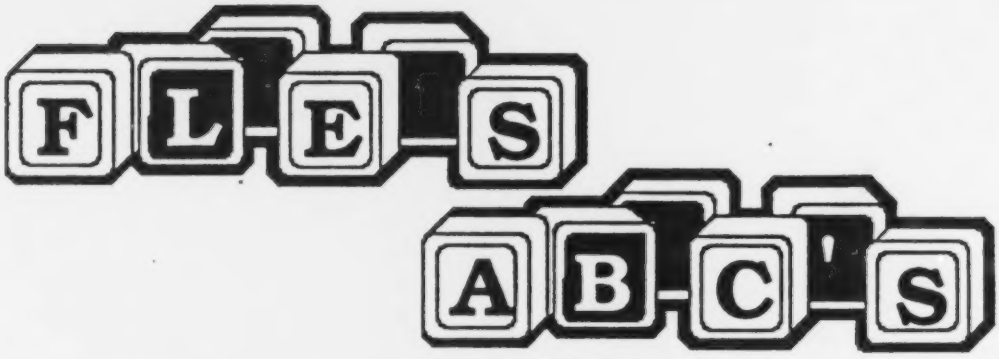
The ABC's of FLES*: Administration, Basics Curriculum and Strategies

FLES* = FLES, FLEX, Immersion



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The ABC's of FLES*: Administration, Basics Curriculum and Strategies

FLES* = FLES, FLEX, Immersion

Picture this scenario: You are a middle school or high school foreign language teacher. Your principal calls you into the office to ask you to serve on yet another planning committee for the school district (on your own time, and at your own expense, of course). It seems that the superintendent, in response to community requests, has promised to offer foreign language instruction in the elementary schools of your district, starting the next academic year! You, as one of the senior second language instructors in the district, have been delegated as the chair of the project. Where do you begin? This paper was written to serve as a primer for those starting a FLES* program. (FLES* = FLES, FLEX, Immersion.) It melds the experiences and varied expertises of three second language professionals: a school district foreign language administrator, a university foreign language education professor, and an in-field, practicing FLES* teacher.

The organization of the paper will be as follows: an overview of FLES*, its importance, and presence in the American elementary school arena in the 1990's; a panorama of FLES* from a macro-perspective, infused with administrative concerns which need to be inculcated within the FLES* supra-structure; a micro-perspective of FLES*, identifying a variety of classroom and curriculum strategies which need to be addressed in the planning and implementation of the new FLES* program; and, a suggested core bibliography for the FLES* planners and staff.

FLES*: One of the New Curricular Basics

Proficiency in a second or even a third language is no longer viewed as a luxury, but rather a necessity for thriving in our multi-lingual, ever-changing, culturally-diverse twenty-first century world. The study of foreign languages and international cultures has become a national priority in the United States. For example, the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies (16) submitted 11 recommendations to the President of the United States of national and state policies for promoting foreign languages and international studies into the nation's schools. In the popular report, A Nation at Risk (14), yet another national commission, the National Commission on Excellence in Education recommended that all American children engage in foreign language and international studies, especially in the early grades. According to this commission: "Achieving proficiency in a foreign language ordinarily requires from 4 to 6 years of study and should, therefore, be started in the elementary grades (p.26)." In addition, foreign languages for elementary school youngsters has been identified by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign

Languages (ACTFL) "as one of the...important issues facing the language teaching profession in the 1990's (Houpt, 7, p.1)."

Foreign language instruction in the elementary school may take one of four forms (Rhodes & Schreibstein, 19):

Type A: Foreign Language Experience (FLEX). In this program, the children are given a general exposure to the culture and language. Basic words, phrases and songs constitute the curriculum. The goal of the program is not to develop proficiency in the language, but rather to interest the participants in possible future study of a second language.

Type B: Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES). Listening and speaking, and basic reading and writing skills help the FLES student gain an appreciation of a second language and culture. Lessons in FLES include greetings, numbers, colors, time concepts and other developmentally appropriate topics for the elementary school child. Some English is usually spoken in class.

Type C: Intensive FLES. Type B FLES goals are expanded to include co-ordination between the second language teacher and the regular elementary school teachers so that similar concepts and taught both in and outside of FLES classes. The second language is the primary linguistic medium of instruction in the Type C FLES classroom.

Type D: Partial or Total Immersion. At least 50 percent of the school day is taught in this second language classroom. The primary goal is to enable the student to communicate with the proficiency of a native speaker of the language that is taught in the Type D FLES classroom.

The elementary school child, is the ideal recipient of an early second language education. Psychologists, linguists, and educators agree that ages 4 to 12 constitute the prime time for foreign language instruction (Macaulay, 11; Medlin, 12). In fact, beyond the age of 10 or 11, children appear to be less open to change (Lambert & Klineberg, 9), and consequently, less likely to accepting other cultures (Carpenter & Torney, 4).

The benefits of early foreign language instruction are many. Researchers have documented its positive effect upon young children's "general school achievement and linguistic progress" (Donoghue, 5; Potts, 15; Smith, 18). It also results in significantly higher gains in social and communication skills, compared to that realized by non-foreign language students during the same period (Brega, 3; Donoghue, 5; Volvolo, 21; Wiley, 22). Learning a foreign language in elementary school also appears to promote English language awareness and "helps children learn to read better in English" (Kindig, 8, pp. 64-65; Lipton, 10). It is not surprising that the study of foreign languages and cultures is now considered "along the five 'basics' of English, mathematics, computer science, social studies, and the natural sciences as fundamental components of a sound education National Advisory Board on International Education Programs, 14).

There is, at present, a renewed emphasis on language instruction in the K-12 classroom nation-wide. According to the latest survey conducted by the Center for Language Education and Research (Rhodes & Oxford, 18), approximately 22 percent of our

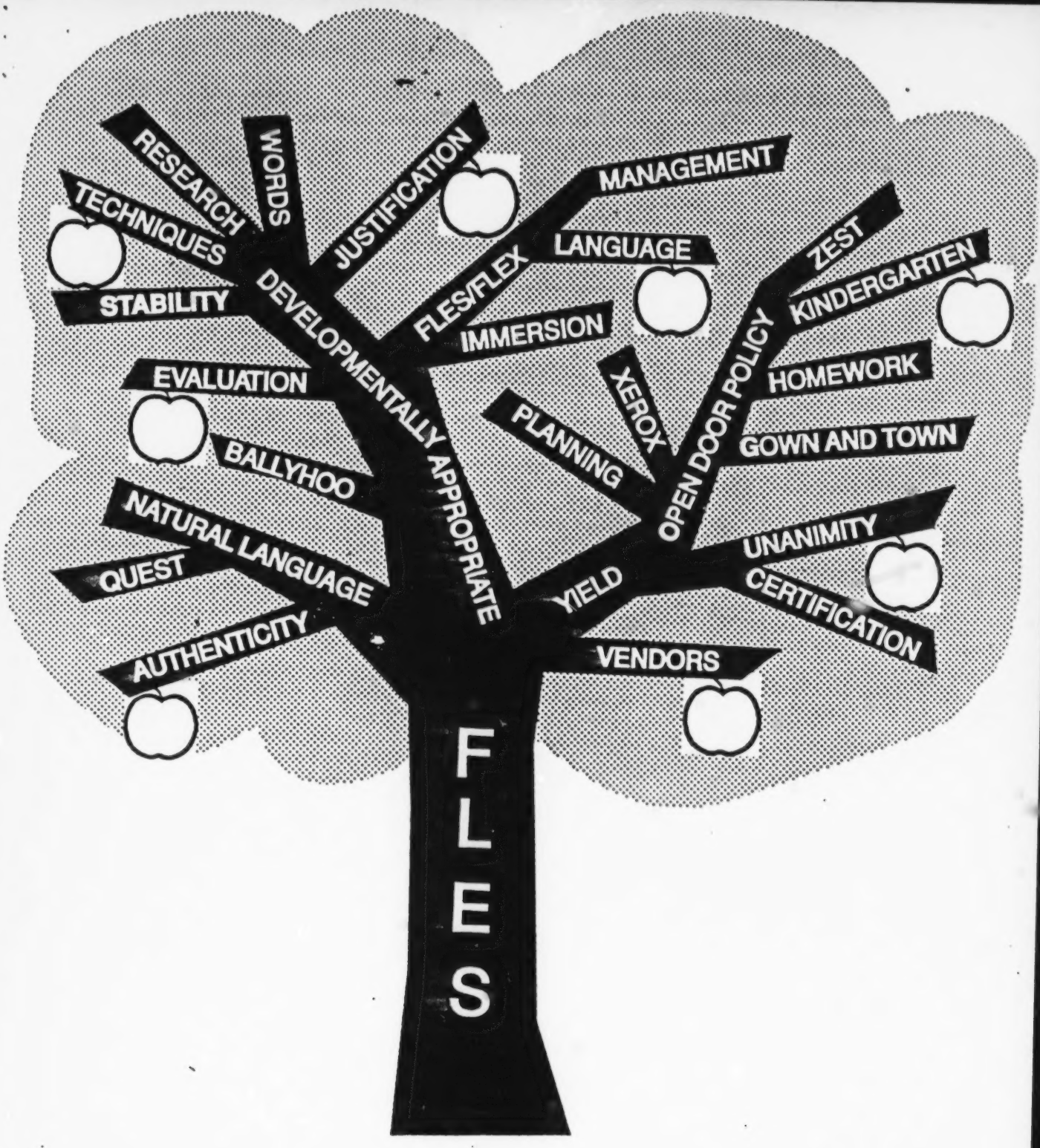
nation's elementary schools and 78 percent of the secondary schools offer instruction in at least one foreign language. These data may not, at first glance appear impressive, but consider the fact that in 1983 "only 15 percent of all high school students...and only one percent" of elementary school students were exposed to a foreign language (Ranbom, 17, p.7). Interestingly enough, five states, Hawaii, Kansas, Louisiana, New York, and North Carolina, have gone beyond just offering foreign language instruction as an integral part of part of their elementary school curricula on certain grade levels. These states have state mandates for an articulated (K-12) foreign language program beginning in the elementary grades. Several others---Arizona, California, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin, have special schools in which a full or a partial school day is actually taught entirely in the target language. (These are full and partial immersion FLES program). The children attending these special schools are taught a typical repertoire of elementary school subjects in French, Spanish, German, Russian, Chinese, or Japanese. Compared to other elementary school students who attend regular English-speaking schools, the children learning the traditional curriculum through the second language academically perform at least as well, and in most cases, better, than those in the monolingual schools.

For those school districts who find themselves wishing to inaugurate a beginning FLES or FLEX program, the following ABC's of FLES will prove invaluable.

The ABC's at Large: An Administrative/Philosophical Perspective---From Authenticity to Zest

Authenticity. As planners formulate their program through mission statements and a review of goals and objectives, it is important that they give full discussion to and achieve consensus on the availability, relevance, and infusion of what we generally refer to as authentic materials (Rogers and Medley, 20). These are not only "print" items, but also are "oral" and "visual." This decision must be based upon the FLES model that is being considered and the foreign language being offered. If an immersion program is being planned, for example, then the question of curriculum fidelity---to district or regulatory dictates and parental preferences---is a foregone conclusion: the program must "match" the "official curriculum." Therefore, "cursive" readers for Grade Two from, say Belgium, are inappropriate if cursive writing is not introduced until Grade Three.

Aside from visual materials and classroom decorations, authenticity must also be understood very carefully to mean the language employed by the teacher. The vocabulary used must be appropriate to the experience of the classroom, irrespective of the model, sequential FLES or immersion. Game words, children's rhymes and songs of childhood, counting and round chants are necessary for the elementary classroom. The teacher adds cultural continuity from both American experience as well as from the second language



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culture. Administrators must ensure that the funds and the time to prepare the repertoire are available to those who establish the program and, more so, those who are its teachers.

Ballyhoo. Public relations will continue to play a significant role in the flourishing growth industry that FLES* has become. Programs, publications (newsletters from the school), press releases, and networking activities should be planned with the well-done style if not professional skill that experience and training in media provide. Publicity must, in the minds of the planners, extend to embrace the notion that the teacher is to be in continual communication with students' parents/guardians. Good "PR" for FLES* is plain common sense, with more than a dollop of time and funding added. Advertising and recruitment attest to this, especially if the elementary school program is born out of a series of choice or magnet school activities, where parental preference and interest and support must be thoroughly considered and sought after.

Certification. While this is a regulatory matter that state officers in an education department provide answers on, it is nevertheless important that those who embark upon FLES* programs consider the array of concerns that may befall them---indeed, it can be argued that despite the assertion that immersion programs cost less than sequential FLES programs, there are hidden costs that are all too visible to the administrator. (And these perhaps, may continue to contribute to the low percentage of immersion programs nationwide.) Planners must be aware of the type of programmatic needs from the linguistic standpoint. It is the authors' belief that near-native and native speakers with extensive background experience (first-hand or second-hand) in childhood learning and the culture of the second language, make formidable FLES* teachers. Issues of alternative certification, coursework of the pre-service period for the language major, and emergency certification, not to mention the entire issue of visas for foreign nationals, will continue throughout the decade, and will either implicitly or explicitly play a role in determining the growth of FLES models, especially in immersion (where "imported" native second language teachers are desirable).

Developmentally Appropriate. As plans are made for the FLES* program, staff members' roles on planning committees assume a vibrant hue: it is incumbent upon the group that curricular activities and learning/teaching strategies and styles be understood as a function of the child's physical/motor/cognitive development (Bredekamp, 2). If, for example, a physical education motor unit in tennis is taught in the target language, the essentials of how a 6-year old holds a racquet must be established before another "basic," footwork on the court, can be taught. Manipulatives of large sizes exist at the primary level for good reason. Language teachers from the middle and senior high level who are called in as the language experts for their planning team must acknowledge their limitations in terms of what children at the K-5 level can be expected to do, and not presume that a transfer of their language knowledge to other domains is possible or

desirable.

Evaluation. Different governing bodies have, in accordance with our culture's interest in measurement, trends, surveys, and percentiles, have long-established policies regarding evaluation and its partner, testing (which should not be mixed together). Planners must establish their goals and objectives and timelines, and willingly submit to another group or sub-group review to evaluate if the stated goals are being met. Infusions of funds for start-up programs are limited, that we know. How well the human and material resources are utilized should be the responsibility of all planners.

Testing is a matter of concern for FLES model programs where immersion is being considered. An informal survey by one of the authors found that many of the immersion program students were not exempt from standardized testing programs that are prevalent at the elementary school level. The confusion that results from having "mixed" signals is apparent here, and does impair program effectiveness, parent support, and administrative implementation. If a child in a total immersion program is administered a standardized test in English, how valid are those results for even longitudinal record-keepers? How does the child react to taking a test or a battery of tests that he/she is incapable of understanding? How important is test-taking per se, and how do negative experiences color one's acceptance of testing as one more aspect of our life? Parents will exert pressure on schools and planners from both perspectives if an immersion program is being developed: they want assurances that their children will be able to function effectively, in English. They will not accept the proposition that scores of an immersion school being published simultaneously with scores of non-immersion students are not for comparative purposed. They will accept, if the trust and sense of community are there, the relative "new-ness: of the program and the data gathered from both Canadian and American immersion programs (documenting that the immersion students eventually perform at least as well on standardized tests, if not better than do the non-immersion students), and not worry about each year's group of test scores. (There are educational advocates for deferring the annual major standardized test-taking procedures for all children until after they have developmentally assimilated the early elementary school curriculum.) Much has to be done at the local level to ensure a compromise position on a matter whose resolution may be some time in coming.

FLES/FLEX. While professionals discuss "which program is best,"or "which program offers more," planners will need to recommend the model which can be funded and established with the resources available or expected. Regardless of the outcome, whether the shortage of trained immersion staff forces a decision to establish a FLES program or a FLEX model, planners should ensure that standards of success are established, including among these a successful model of articulation with middle school (and high school) language offerings. Program models have been discussed in much longer essays and monographs; readers and planners are advised

to consult the attached bibliography and begin reading!

Gown and Town. As with the topic of certification, in those areas where post-secondary institutions are located, public relations must include decision-makers who are "outside the normal loop" of planning. Academic interest in the program from colleagues at the college level may need to be cultivated; quite often, instructors from university language departments may have had little experience in FLES* and/or little experience in bottoms-up planning for articulation. As has again and again been called for, we renew here the plea that viewing one's colleagues with suspicion---a two-way street---will hamper the development of sound language programs. Instead, we recommend that "Town" (in this case, K-12) and "gown" respond to the common needs of language learners, whether they be FLEX, FLES, or immersion students. Goals of elementary school programs are different than those of the college students' classroom. maturity and other factors cannot simply be erased and used as judgmental arguments for or against any plans. As ACTFL and other associations concern our profession's active members with priorities, unity of purpose will be achieved. But, it is each individual's responsibility locally to ensure that the timeline for unity be shortened.

Homework. In addition to this heading signifying the commonly-held view of paper and pencil activities from the classroom reviewed at home (as well as, in some areas, cassette or videotapes), planners must assist parents with the opportunity to enroll in coursework of formal/informal nature so that they become involved in their children's newly-acquired skill. Not every parent will have the ability to take advantage of the program; not every teacher in the school, for example, where a FLES* class is offered, will sign up. That a course be given, with serious undertaking and support from planners and administrators, will send a signal that the program is not considered a frill. Parents and teachers in such classrooms will understand not only some aspects of the language the children are learning, but will also have the opportunity to reflect on the cultural and social openness they must model for their children as our country undergoes great demographic changes in the decades to come.

Immersion. There is more to this one topic than a few sentences can even hope to cover. Readers must be conversant with a variety of needs and phrases, from "content-based" to "motherese." Actual site visits to such programs are obligatory for planners. Planners and others are referred to the bibliography, and enjoined to read, read, read, and think, think, think Immersion programs' wealth of contributions to the future of our citizenry have yet to be tapped.

Justification. Planners, in their rationale discussions, must be able to review the reasons why they expect the FLES* model they have decided upon to be successful. They must also be articulate in the area of justifying the need for second language programs. Schools and committees should therefore assemble an "album" of articles on the benefits of second language learning, and develop the necessary "brochure" to sell the concept, and ultimately, the

FLES* program. (See Ballyhoo.) Truth in advertising will help: studies such as those by Cooper (4) and Wiley (22) demonstrate the importance and essence of our mission.

Kindergarten. Again, planners must begin their activities at the earliest levels; issues of natural attrition---the mobile American---and teacher availability, as well as the importance of the wonderfully innocent world of childhood classes and affection that Kindergarten classrooms should have, mandate that FLES models begin as early as possible, with organizational and time structures in place to benefit the model chosen. P.S.: Teachers do make a difference in the success of a program, and planning teams will have to consider this facet of development very carefully. Are kindergarten teachers "born, not trained?"

Language. Under this heading, planners must understand the importance of staffing requirements in order to achieve the model of authentic language acquisition that they have decided upon. They must also encourage the continuing dialogue among one another and other representatives of the school and community whose children are to be enrolled in the program. The magnet foreign language program in Kansas City, Missouri, uses the slogan, "Language Connects" on T-shirts, brochures, and other public relations eye-catchers; its serves as a reminder that unless we who plan and administer engage in equitable discourse on the program, we will find ourselves isolated from adequately serving the needs of the children. Teacher preparation falls under this rubric, and is a connecting point between planning dialogue and staffing requirements. AS was pointed out n "Gown and Town," there is an expectation that staff members will be more than perfunctorily skilled at enhancing a child's language. Academic discourse is not appropriate; the Nacherzahlung, for example, or the discussion about a literary/cultural topic that serves as a vehicle for the language major, will not assist the beginning foreign language teacher, FLES, FLEX, or immersion, in conducting classroom activities that focus upon a graphing activity. If, therefore, the pre-service program of the teacher lacked the adequate information, then it is the responsibility of the in-service program group to ensure that funding and resources exist to promote the successful activities desired.

Management. From a "macro" prospective, planner and developer should understand the commitment that needs to be made to the specific FLES* model. In the case of immersion, there will be attrition among student numbers, as was already pointed ut. The consequence of shrinking class numbers is that the attrition must be "swallowed." Adding children into a closed system at the inappropriate juncture limits the "purity of the program from the language acquisition standpoint. (Naturally, there are always exceptions. Children who have spent considerable time n an other-language environment and therefore have grade-level appropriate language skills, are certainly encouraged to join, as would be children from one city's immersion program to another.)

Immersion programs probably provide the greatest "hidden cost" in terms of administrative responsiveness and adjustment. Inasmuch

as foreign national or resident alien staff are not so plentiful as desired, a new factor in human resource management, the Visa/Immigration Office, may have to be developed. Recruitment travel to other nations, establishment of various linkages across the oceans and borders, and the involvement of state offices of teacher licensure, become and integral part of planning and financing. A sub-set of this issue is the need to acculturate the new teacher from abroad to the system of American education, again a management consideration/cost. Ultimately, depending upon the program model decided upon, "business as usual" takes a back seat, a reality that is a times difficult to achieve in the centralized environment that people and finance issues continue to be. Flexibility in thinking and problem-solving are important in order for the program to flourish. "Minor" matters, such as classroom management and building administrator influence on the program, take on the "micro" perspective.

Natural Language. Planners who operate from the premise that teachers talk and students quietly sit and listen, will lead others naive enough to follow, to an untimely (programmatic) end. If there are no team members who have experienced first-hand a lower elementary classroom, site visits and debriefing sessions are mandatory. Only then will decision-makers understand the need for funding needed programs to in-service staff who must use parenting language, repetition, paraphrase, body-language, facial expressions, game songs, and other first-language techniques to fill the classroom air with learnable language. Why not have planners and staff also read Language Two (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 6)?

Open Door Policy. Part of the team effort the planning a FLES* program that should continue is the shared empowerment of that group. The authors note how "things" at schools apparently get better with stability (i.e. time). The dialogue of evaluation is a necessity; planners and administrators have to insist that their time be available to direct service providers (teachers, aides, para-professionals), in order to facilitate changes that are needed. Stability of the program evolves, to be sure, but is must not be confused with rigor mortis, which though inevitable for all things mortal, does not lead to programmatic liveliness and vitality.

Planning. The essence of a successful program is that time is taken to think about what is to come, what has come, and why. Be they "Five Easy Pieces" to inservice of FLES* teachers, or daily lesson-planning duties, team members must commit to continued review of their work. Self-review and paired or shared empowerment based upon the various co-operative strategies frequently mentioned in educational circles, do not diminish the vision that has been decided upon. Rather, it serves as a device for fulfilling the dream planners have. Various planning activities, such as grade-level involvement of the FLES* teacher, programs of report card grading by the partial immersion teacher and his/her English colleague(s), and building-level committee work, are important factors in the school environment. WE MUST PRACTICE WHAT WE

PREACH.

Quest. Know the goals, know what one needs to have ready by what calendar date, be articulate in the exposition of the plan under development, and now that any quest will run at right angles to the quest of other groups ("Garcia's Law")! Planning for the quest means understanding the process of change, and taking the time to understand what the change in the elementary school day means for others who are presently teaching and working in the building. An immersion program, for example, will probably mean that some teacher transfers will take place. That quest could virtually destroy the friendship of the two kindergarten staff members who have developed several wonderful activities for their groups if the program mandates that there will be one total immersion kindergarten and one English group, and, predictably, the latter staff member has no second language skills. Similarly, the FLES teacher who is given a classroom rather than a cart to teach from, may displace an activities area or program that was formerly popular. If the planners' quest does not take the human element into account, several negative consequences will inevitable result that may damage FLES* program effectiveness.

Research. Reading is fun, we tell our children. Reading research is rewarding, especially prior to and during the planning period for setting up a FLES program. Research is powerful, and contributes to the group's ease that it is not "alone." USING THE RESULTS OF WHAT IS LEARNED IS AN IMPORTANT GIANT STEP. Contacts with others, their visits to your area, your writing them---all these and more are contributions you make to establishing a well-though-out program.

Stability. Staff permanence, continued administrative support, parent co-operation---all are hallmarks of a successful school FLES program. Added to the list, may be a variety of local resources, including the development of appropriate materials for teachers to utilize. Again, as statistics and trends demonstrate, the extent to which children at risk exist in a society or nation at risk, we must accept the reality that the schools of today and tomorrow, and the responsibilities teachers and others must assume, are different from the classrooms of yesterday.

Techniques. From the planners' viewpoint, "this has never been done before" must give way to "what can we learn from others who have done this?" Several excellent studies and videotapes exist to assist planners and teachers; research is fun!

Unanimity (for Infusion). A FLES* program cannot exist in an environment that does not respect the multi-cultural reality of our country. If the planning team expects children to acquire a second language, the role models---adults---must be found throughout the school. Classes for adults have already been mentioned; visual impact (signs, displays, performances) is important. Celebration, however, is not enough! Celebration must occur. What aspects of the curriculum can be used to support the language program is a question that must be asked at the same time that question, "What does the language program do to support the entire school program?" is raised. If measurement in mathematics is a topic, then perhaps,

the study of pyramids in Mexico or Egypt is in order. If healthy foods and "basic food groups" are considered, then which foods comprise the family staples in Cuba or Belgium might be reviewed. Unanimity of purpose means, therefore, that the individual language teacher becomes a co-operative source of ideas and a seeker of ideas from other colleagues simultaneously. Shared planning must continue to underline the co-operative source of ideas and a seeker of ideas from other colleagues simultaneously. Shared planning must continue to underscore the co-operative basis of future success, and to the extent that the FLES program chosen changes the school, the school must reflect the new reality.

Vendors. Planning teams that make site visits will quickly find out how important self-make materials are (and what the consequent budgetary needs will be) for a sound FLES* program. Visitors will come away from other programs knowing which vendors provide materials that are suitable for immersion. Spanish immersion programs, for example, have greater access to items than do French and German immersion programs. Having vendors from other nations means that a planning team would do well to establish the necessary relationships and policies that govern the activities of a centralized purchasing division. The substructures that need to be in place include time and personnel devoted to contacting suppliers (often in another language), understanding issues of customs, billing and payment activities, and, the understanding of others' vacation periods. (No, it is not a good idea to order materials from Europe in late July for an early September delivery!)

Warnings. If these few paragraphs make you feel confident, start worrying! Your work has only just begun. Exercises in thinking of emergencies happening at the same time and how you and your team would respond to the potentially volatile situation, should be part of the planning activities. Mimi Met (Co-ordinator for Foreign Language, Montgomery County Public Schools, Gaithersburg, Maryland), recently pointed out how teaching means thinking about what you are doing as though your were teaching inside a popcorn machine with the corn popping and you maintaining your thoughts and composure all the while! Just think about that challenge!

Xerox. Almost a generic term like Kleenex, let "X" stand for equipment needs. (See Vendors.) Copying equipment, desktop publishing machinery, and other items (e.g. a videophone or a fax machine at the school, and when appropriate and "budgetable," computers and laser-discs) are wonderful hardware support for the FLES* program. Teaching and teachers are an investment, not a cost; we know this. Planners, therefore, accept the consequences of decisions and determine how much and how often the budget should "drive" the program, or vice-versa.

Yield. Don't expect an early harvest. The labors of FLES* are long. Expect the program to bear fruit after five to six years, and, ensure that, as do good farmers, that you continue to toil in the fields. (See Stability, and Open Door Policy.)

Zest and Zeal. If "walking on water" is a characteristic we often dream that FLES people have, then the "wind beneath the wings" must

also be supported by those who have previously demonstrated the "Z's" (as opposed to the "Zzzzzz")! Zip, Zest, Zeal, and Zeroing-in (on the activity), are essential to planning and developing the model FLES program. Long meetings, summer work, 9-day weeks and 14-month years do tend to burn out individuals, but their half-life is lengthened by the support group who is simultaneously sharing their wind-making and foot-floating devices.

The ABC's of Classroom Strategies

All the World's a Stage. All good foreign language teachers deserve best-actor/actress academy awards! There is no such think as an introverted teacher in a foreign language classroom. Since the target language should be spoken primarily in the class, all explanations must be done in the target language (in the Intensive FLES and immersion classrooms). In order to help convey the meaning of vocabulary, the teacher must often make exaggerated motions, facial expressions, and gesticulations, over-emphasizing key concepts. When visitors appear at the FLES* doorway, the principal will usually just shrug and say something to the effect of: "you understand...foreign language class;" the visitor will probably understand.

Not only are teachers expected to be stars, but so also should the students. The more active the students are, the more fun they will have and the more likely they will want to learn a second language. They will also tend to retain the information longer because they were physically (right hemispherically) involved (Asher, 1) in the skill-getting/learning process. FLES* students may wish to act out a simple dialogue (with appropriate props), retell a story, or play charades. Go ahead and not only let but encourage the students to be "hams" in the FLES* class. Allow them to assume second language personas; it helps.

Build on Previously-Learned Vocabulary and Concepts. Once students have learned a group of vocabulary words/concepts, don't stop using them. Language learning in a cumulative process. Continually add new vocabulary that will allow students to pull from past lessons and to begin to create language and express original ideas in new phrases and sentences. If a vocabulary board is displayed in the classroom, with picture of all the previously-learned vocabulary, this process will be aided. Remember, out of sight, out of mind ...but in sight, and in use!

Content-Based and Context-Based Instruction. Language instruction given in isolation of the curricular realities and content of the elementary school is doomed to fail. If the goal of learning and utilizing a second language is proficiency, the language must be taught as an integrated entity with the regular elementary school offerings. It must be relevant, presented in a creative, interesting fashion, and above all else, developmentally and intellectually palatable to the FLES student.

Develop Authentic Culture-Based Lessons. Try to learn about as many cultural events and holidays that occur in the countries where the foreign language taught is spoken. Gather a full basket of

• Flashcards & Picture Games
• Games, Songs, & Dances
• Hands-on, manipulative activities
• Individual Needs
• Jump, Jiggle, and Jabber
• Ken & Barbie
• All the World's a Stage!
• Build on a previous Vocabulary
• Content-Based and Content-Based Instructions
• Develop authentic culture-based lessons
• Eye-level with Students
• Like-sounding and generically-similar words
• Motherese
• Nonsense is just good knowledge
• Overlap subject matter areas -team teaching is a must
• Patience
• Question, question, question!
• Repeat, repeat, repeat repeat, repeat...
• Storytelling
• Teach to both the left brain & the right brain
• Understanding
• Visuals
• Wide range of activities
• Xerox
• Yell!--& Whisper!
• Zip & Zest

information so that its can be shared with the FLES* students. For example, when teaching French, dress up in the guise of St. Nicholas, and bring oranges and nuts to the FLES* students. A modification of the "Tour de France" could be a "Tour de Sugar Creek" or "Tour de Franklin." Making the language and culture relevant to the personal lives of the FLES* students makes it "real" and therefore, more believable and ultimately, more acceptable.

Another strategy for teaching culture is to "eat" one's way through different countries! Students (and parents/teachers) love to eat, and they love to create. With the help of parents and/or the home-ec. department, the FLES* teacher can actually prepare authentic recipes, fit for immediate classroom consumption! (In the absence of a "real" kitchen, an electric skillet will work almost as well, and be a little easier to clean-up.) The food of a country may give students a wonderful insight into the way of life of a second language society. "Cooking through a language" can be very motivational, especially during that period of the day when everyone is already starving!

One final suggested culture strategy is to invite guest-speakers who have lived in or are native to countries that are studied in class. There are living realia! There is no substitute for the REAL THING!

Eye-Level With the Students. Trying to stay on the same eye-level with the students can be a big bonus to the FLES* teacher. One who stays at the same physical level with the students tends to develop a better rapport with them than does the teacher who always remains at a level much higher than the students. It is much easier for the youngsters to look at you if they do not have to stain their necks to do so. In addition, the less effort it takes a student to pay attention, the easier the teacher's job can be. Being on the same eye-level as the students can allow them to more readily and willing respond to the FLES* teacher who is not immediately viewed as a superior. Posturing oneself, however, in the "traditional" physical teacher mode, is effective to regain student control should a behavior management problem exist.

Flashcards and Picture Games. Commercial and home-made (less expensive and usually more colorful) flashcards and picture games can be used in a variety of ways. It is also very important to have at least three sets of all vocabulary cards. One set should be kept on a perpetual (exposed) vocabulary/bulletin board, where the new works are continually be worked in, and old ones reviewed. The second and third sets should be used for games. Whenever possible, new vocabulary needs to be given to the students often and in as many varieties and settings as possible. Games such as Concentration, Go Fish, Pyramid, Matched Pairs, and Around the World are fun and easy to play and give the students the extra needed practice.

Games, Songs, and Dances. Foreign cultures offer a variety of games, songs, and dances that should become a daily part of the FLES* class. They make wonderful warm-up as well as wind-up activities. Even though the FLES* teacher may not be a native-

born speaker, s/he can, with a little research, identify a rich potpourri of authentic songs, dances and games. To supplement authentic songs and games in taken from the culture of the target language, typical American elementary school games such as Duck, Duck, Goose, Mother May I, and the Alphabet Game (where students go on a trip, to the store, etc., and take or purchase an item that starts with an A; the next person repeats the A and then adds the B, and so on), are easily used in the FLES* classroom. Although childhood games are easily adaptable, songs are a little tricky! Although authentic songs are wonderful for teaching new vocabulary in the target language, if one in not available, the resourceful FLES* teacher can always compose one. Necessity is the mother of invention, and sometimes, survival in the FLES* classroom.

Hands-On, Manipulative Activities. These are must-do strategies. Anytime a student is actively involved with a lesson that student is learning. The more times the language learner can see (and feel) an object, and repeat its name and/or use it in a sentence, the more likely it will be remembered. In illustration, when teaching food vocabulary, it is helpful to bring in actual foods, pass them around the class, have the FLES* students see them, feel them, smell them, and draw them. Ask the youngsters what their favorite fruit is, for example. Expect them to participate and to share their likes and dislikes in the classroom. The more experiences provided to the learners, the better experiences the latter will have.

Individual Needs. In every class, there are students who tend to grasp new concepts faster or slower than their peers. These students all have specific needs, and may indeed have different learning styles. The mode of instruction, by necessity, needs to be varied, and include written, oral, aural, visual and manipulative examples. The FLES* teacher need not fear repeating new information too many times.

Jump, Jiggle, Jabber. Do anything else that works! Total Physical Response (Asher) activities (having students respond physically and right hemispherically to oral commands) are wonderful and fun to do in the FLES classroom. Students must learn to listen carefully to understand what is being asked of them. The funnier or more odd the commands, the more the students will enjoy this type of activity. (So what if the teacher asks a student to put a rubber duck on his/her head? Needless to say, that student and others will probably always remember the vocabulary introduced and practiced in such a novel situation.) Commands such as, "jump, turn around," "quack like a duck," "put the chair on the table," "sit in the chair," and put the yellow crayon in your right (careful, outer) ear" will demand auditory comprehension and simultaneously allow the student to be physically active. These can be fun, creative, and rewarding activities for both the FLES* teacher and the students.

Ken and Barbie. These are not merely dolls. They are also a vehicle through which students (even the shy ones) may talk self-consciously. When the FLES* learner "talks" through another persona, many inhibitions previously observed in the quiet student,

may disappear and be replaced with a newer and bolder person. The learner, then, is not "put on the spot" to use or manipulate the second language; the puppet, stuffed animal, or doll becomes the focal point of attention and appears center-stage. Consequently, the FLES student may start to blossom and begin to use the new language less self-consciously and more frequently.

Not only are dolls good manipulatives, but also are puppets. Indeed, puppets can be much more fun than dolls. They can be purchased or better yet, made by and for the students in the FLES classroom. Making the puppets in class offers a perfect opportunity to review parts of the body, articles of clothing, weather expressions, emotions, and colors. Again, the notion of language-in-context is illustrated.

Like-Sounding and Generically-Similar Words. These should not be taught together. Imagine the poor child who must learn cheveux and chevaux at the same time, while the teacher is busy saying, "now, don't get these words mixed-up. One means hair, the other means horses. Later drills with "minimal pair" words are appropriate, but not at the time of initial learning. Another disclaimer to vocabulary instruction is not to teach like-sounding vocabulary in the same groups at the same time. Rather, teach concept groups (e.g. farm animals; weather expressions) in context.

Mother-ese. This is what one's mother might do to reduce one's anxiety of talking. When students make a grammatical or pronunciation error, the best way to correct the error is to quickly correctly repeat the proper pronunciation of the uttered word error. The child should not be forced (traumatized) and expected to immediately and correctly repeat the word. Likewise, a verbal error should not be corrected in mid-sentence or mid-thought. The student can be gently corrected, as a loving, gentle mother might do.

Nonsense. Having fun in the classroom promotes learning. The "wackier" the class is sometimes, the more fun everyone will have. Students can be asked to do silly (but appropriate) things, such as, "draw a blue cat," or, demonstrate how to "eat carrots while barking," or even, "ride a skateboard like a 100-year old person." Don't be afraid to use imagination in the FLES* classroom.

Overlap Subject Matters and Team Teach. Let's be realistic here. The FLES* teacher's field of expertise is language instruction. Therefore, one need not know the entire French royal lineage by memory, or be able to create the perfect meringue, quiche, or crepe, all the while being able to given an extemporaneous fact-filled lecture on pre-impressionism and its influence on later artwork. The FLES* teacher, although gifted, is only human, after all. There are other professionals in the FLES* school who know these things, and would be delighted to team-teach them with you, in exchange, perhaps, for you sharing some of your language expertise with their non-second language students. Teaming with other teachers in the building helps promote camaraderie and lets the others know what it is that you really do in your FLES* classroom!

Patience. Some people have it; some do not; some could if they

tried. It is imperative that the FLES teacher remember that the FLES* students did not learn English in one month, and that the language acquisition process does take time, practice and much patience on the parts of both teacher and student. In addition, one must not ignore the fact that everyone has a different style and individual needs must be met in a timely, patient, non-threatening way. The FLES* teacher must not give up or give in, but try to exercise a little patience.

Questions and Answers. These are two important aspects of a foreign language program. Knowing how to ask the right questions, and learning when to expect the responses can be a real challenge to the FLES* teacher. One must not play the "guess what is in my head game." Questions should be geared to a particular cognitive level, and be asked in a straight-forward, non-oblique fashion. In addition, questions must be constructed and asked to ensure student success. Open-ended questions almost always are good choices, especially for the novice FLES student. Levels of difficulty need to be varied as well. Students should be exposed to the "who, what, when, where, why" questions as well as more challenging questions. Warning: It is tempting to expect the student to be able to perform on his/her (English) cognitive level rather than gearing the level of question to the student's linguistic level of performance.

Another important variable is "pause" or " wait" time. The student should be given at least three seconds to answer a question. Even a little more time would be appropriate in the second language classroom. To reiterate from above, patience is important.

If a particular question is not answered correctly by a particular called-upon student, why not defer the question to the entire class? The student saves face, and the others get an opportunity to participate.

Repeat, Repeat, Repeat. Repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, and then, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, and repeat some more!

Story-Telling. This can be one of the most important strategies used in the FLES* classroom. It is a super strategy for teaching vocabulary, sentence structure, comprehension, grammar, and most importantly, language-in-context. It can be used to teach sequencing, to give character analysis, and to describe. Stories need to be dramatically told, supplemented by tons of visuals and when possible, music and even sound effects! New vocabulary needs to be pre-taught to avoid later frustration. On-going student choral response throughout the second and subsequent telling of the story is not only fun, but brings the story alive. Students (with props) will later love to act out different parts of the new story, and maybe even, change a part or even the ending of the story. Later, students can be encouraged to narrate or re-tell the story in their own words. This is manipulation of language at its best. There is virtually no limit to the activities that can accompany a story or to the benefits that can be derived from telling stories.

Treats and Rewards. There will always be a debate as to whether one should or should not reward students for learning. In a FLES* classroom, there should be no debate over this matter. Treating and rewarding the students is a very favorably-received instructional/motivational strategy. P.S. Treats do not have to be tangible or edible. Stickers, pencils, and "movie tickets" (which can later be redeemed for something concrete, such as a "free homework" night, or two extra points on a quiz), work quite well and are well within the parameters of the modestly-remunerated FLES* teacher.

Understanding by the Student. At first, the FLES* teacher may not want to push the student to orally express comprehension of the target language. Other expressions of comprehension include most physical activities, such as: drawing, pointing, or acting out a command.

Visuals. These are a must for the second language classroom. Beg, borrow, trade, steal and create massive quantities of visuals. They can be laminated and mounted on paperplates, boxes, tag board, put in a mobile, pasted or "velcroed" on a window, door, wall, or even on the teacher and/or students! Encourage students to seek out appropriate visuals to be used in the classroom. This makes a wonderful activity for an end-of-the-week class or a shortened-period! The benefit of having the students help with the visuals is that they will not only be proud of their creative efforts, but also take very good care of their own handiwork!

Xerox. Use the xerox, ditto and stencil machines as much as possible. Careful, however: Handouts should not just be "busy sheets" but consist of meaningful work to practice and reinforce concepts taught in class. Do beg, borrow, copy, trace materials from and trade same with your colleagues. P.S. Coloring books are inexpensive, carbon-based (ready for the thermofax machine) and wonderful yet often over-looked sources for appropriate classroom exercises. It is important to duplicate and publish (to parents and the community) the efforts made by the FLES program and the progress made by the students.

Yell and Whisper! The FLES teacher must learn to become a master of voice modulation and control. Students also enjoy listening to the variety and love to accept the challenge of altering their voices as well. A single oral utterance, given with a variety of different voices, tones and pitches, not to mention different emotional undertones, can effectively be repeated without the students being "tuned out."

Zip and Zest. The more of these two important ingredients integrated into the FLES classroom, the more contagious enthusiasm will be generated, and the more successful the FLES* program will become.

Final Thoughts on the ABC's of FLES*

This paper has attempted to highlight some of the challenges which need to be identified and met for the successful planning and implementation of a viable FLES* program. The thoughts expressed

are our own, but hopefully incorporate the spirit, dreams, and ambitions of those of us dedicated to and intimately involved with FLES*.

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